

Consult labour on transport: Fedusa

Unions should have been consulted about plans to introduce an integrated public transport system controlled by municipalities, the Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) said on Thursday.



"Our federation is yet to be officially informed of any such decisions, yet our members are the people that are going to be affected," said general secretary Dennis George in a statement.

On Wednesday, transport department director general George Mahlalela said Cape Town had been chosen as a pilot for the proposed venture.

At present, subsidies were provided by the provincial government for taxis, and by the national department for commuter rail transport and taxis. Under the new scheme, municipalities would manage these funds.

For example, the Passenger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa) would get subsidies from municipalities, rather than from a central pool as was the present arrangement.

Mahlalela said the National Transport Act, passed three years ago, emphasised the importance of decentralising public transport functions to municipalities.

George said there were concerns that the retirement funds and other statutory bargaining matters relating to Fedusa members employed by Metrorail could be affected by the change.

"Chapter Seven of the Constitution makes no provision for municipalities to control and run local passenger railway operations. Unless the government wishes to make legislative changes to our Constitution, metropolitan railway services should remain under the jurisdiction of Prasa," he said.

Fedusa had arranged a meeting with Transport Minister Sibusiso Ndebele to clarify the potential implications of the transfer for workers.

The City of Cape Town was expected to complete its feasibility study for the project by the end of the year.

Mahlalela said that it would take "many years" for the whole country to move to an integrated public transport system, but gradual implementation would ensure adequate preparation and that capacity and skills were in place.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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